

# MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church & Society REPORT

Report #32, July-August 1980

## Follow-up Focus on Native Americans/Canadians

The Task Force Report No. 26 (July 1979) focused on Native Americans, dealing with the history of Indian nations in North America and the current situation of native peoples, who, despite potential for enormous wealth through wise development of resources on Indian lands, rank at the bottom of virtually every social indicator in their countries. Because the issue was general in scope—aside from an article on forced and uninformed sterilization of Native women—the Task Force asked me to follow up the issue with one touching Mennonites and Native American women more directly. Responses to several questions were solicited of readers and others—either those who are Native American or non-Indians who have had close contact with Native Americans.

The following material is arranged roughly in the categories of the questions, which were as follows: 1) Is feminism an issue for Native American Mennonite women? 2) What do you as a woman, value in your Native American heritage? Your Mennonite faith? 3) What do you see as points of identification—and points of conflict/difference between Mennonites and Native Americans? 4) What important things about the present day situation of Native Americans do you want Mennonite women to know? 5) Do you feel more able to relate to Native Americans as a woman?

Initials at the end of each paragraph or group of paragraphs identify the respondents, who are introduced briefly at the end. Many of the respondents emphasized that because Indians are of many nations, their experiences with one tribe might not carry across in another tribal setting. Where possible, a tribal identification is made. Even where responses sound generalized, those women ask to be understood as having had a specific experience out of which the generalizations came.

Betsy Beyler

Betsy Beyler, who assembled materials for this Report, is currently Acting Director of the MCC Peace Section Washington Office, and among other issues, covers Native American affairs.

### Is feminism an issue for Native American women? What is the role of women in Indian societies?

Houma women have historically taken a leadership role in family and tribal affairs. However, other than a

few more cosmopolitan women, they relate very little to the feminist movement. EB

*Feminism is not yet much of an issue for Navajo Mennonite women. But it is an issue for a few Navajo non-Mennonite women. Enclosed find a recent newspaper clipping from the Navajo Times (a tribal-owned newspaper), describing a conference for women held in June in Gallup, NY, sponsored by the Navajo Area Federal Women's Program.*

*The Navajo woman "holds the purse-strings", and rules the household in a general way. However, sometimes, if both the wife and husband become Christians, they share responsibilities in accordance with the Bible. It seems to me that although Navajo women are leaders in the home, the Navajo men certainly tend to try to ignore Navajo women in public gatherings (with the exception of the Christian church). Even in the home, Navajo men tend to be fed first, and then women and children later. (This is among the traditional Indians; the modern "jet set" Navajos share obligations and responsibilities, unless the husband is an alcoholic.) BB*

With the coming of education and the development of tribal government, politics and community affairs are discussed at community meetings, and the women play an influential role. More women are also elected as tribal representatives (Hopi tribe). Feminism is not an issue as long as ceremonial issues are not involved. Hopi religion is the man's responsibility. NFM

*In Canada there is a notable prominence of Native women in the midst of critical new Native organizations. The Native women show special leadership in those organizations that are not primarily funded by government agencies. In other words, the organizations of a more political nature tend to be staffed by Native men, especially those who are classified as registered Indians. But organizations that come a little closer to the crunch of poverty, alcoholic abuse, and marriage stress seem to be headed by women.*

*It is probably helpful to look at the overall social change affecting Native people. Specifically those Indian or Inuit groups who have a strong history of male authority face a vicious upset when their members hit the urban scene. Almost without exception the family is brought under severe stress resulting from jobless-*

ness, especially of males, from very accessible alcohol, and from the myriad of social stimuli that a city offers. It should be noted that Indian women, especially younger women, seem to have an easier entry into the job market than do Indian males. Noticeable also is the fact that government assistance programs have a built-in preference for females. Family allowance and welfare checks are usually given to women to contrast with the strong traditional trend where the men were the economic sustainers. And the general rules hold that whoever brings home the bacon rules the roost. Among Native families in Winnipeg the trend is fairly obvious that Native women are the holders of the fort and the controllers of their children. Men seem to take a very secondary role.

On the reserve away from the city there is also a collaboration of women evident in some areas. Some reserves witness a birth of women's organization where the most basic questions of caring for children are answered. The Roseau Reserve of Manitoba, for instance, has constructed a very original building in the form of a traditional earthen lodge which is designed to teach and socialize toddlers of this Ojibwa community. The Native women simply put their heads together almost in defiance of their counterpart males to try to get the family unit back together again even in their revised extended family style.

One of the legislative points of ugliness in Canada is related to the treaty regulations. The Indian Act prescribes that registered Indian men can retain their treaty status upon marrying non-treaty women. But the reverse is not true. Treaty women marrying non-treaty men lose their treaty status in that marriage. Indian women of Canada have made several attempts to equalize the legal regulations, but to no avail yet. One result of this lopsided law is a marriage arrangement that retains a common law status. Just yesterday a treaty woman of Winnipeg told me that she and her common law husband would not get married even though her husband wished to do so. They have lived together for 8 or 9 years and have two children. She said, "I will not marry because that means I lose my treaty." MW

In my experience, Mennonite men run things, while Indian women do. This is not because the system of the Native Americans is matrilineal in all cases, but rather because the men have had their traditional male roles taken away and replaced with a resounding void. This is devastating for them, and for the women as well. What it does to their self-esteem is a grave problem.

There's hardly any concept among the Indian people of women being oppressed. Rather, there is a concept of "all of us (Indians) are in this together". This is a strong feeling. Because of historical circumstances, many Indian men have been robbed of their traditional male roles—it would be absurd for Indian women to feel oppressed as women in most cases! BOM

**As a woman, what do you value in your Native American heritage and in your Mennonite faith?**

From what I've observed, living closely with Navajos for 20 years, the Navajo woman is the household member who takes the lead in introducing Christianity to her family. The Mennonite faith gives the Navajo woman a group to belong to—to share joys and sorrows and solutions and problems with. This is highly important for the Navajo woman, as it is for any other woman. A Christian Navajo woman is sought out for her wisdom and understanding and love. BB

In my Native American heritage I most appreciate the clan system—the communal dependency to help one another. There is sharing of food, sharing of work—a community of unity to work for the common good. This communal sharing may not last much longer, as education and salaried jobs have changed the status of the people. NFM

**What do you see as points of identification—and points of difference/conflict between Mennonites and Native Americans?**

In terms of the small group of Native Americans I have known personally, the areas in which we identified—were able to communicate and identify with each other—were: 1) Spiritual quality of life. Many Native Americans and many Mennonites share a sharp sense of the reality of a spiritual nature in life—an awareness of the sacredness of life and of humanity, a sense of the presence of something greater than ourselves—God. 2) Rural background and love for the earth. 3) Appreciation of tradition and the value of "old" things. I found American Indian friends spent much time talking about the old ways, the things they heard from elders in their tribes, the traditional customs and events of their people, their history and the richness of their past. This is not totally unlike Mennonite care for Anabaptist history, Mennonite preoccupation with Mennonite values and idiosyncrasies (even those we have rejected). 4) Feeling that we are part of a group or community. Mennonite concern for family and church past is not unlike the close ties American Indians feel with their family, clans and tribal groups. KMB

Points of identification between the Hopi and the Mennonites at one time was the peace witness, the simple style of living, the "hard working" attitude, and the sharing of material goods. Traditional Hopis would be similar to the more conservative groups of Mennonites—Old Mennonites, Holdeman Mennonites, and Mennonite Brethren. The progressive Hopis would be similar to the General Conference Mennonites.

At one time the Mennonites stressed learning English, and the Hopi stressed their own language. Now the opposite has occurred. A compromise has yet to occur, but it's probably too late as many Hopi teenagers have almost lost their ability to speak Hopi. It is a mixture of English and Hopi, but mostly it is English.

The main point of conflict between Hopi and Mennonite is the 80 years of teaching that Hopi culture is heathenistic. It will probably take another generation before the concept of the indigenous church will be a

reality. The General Conference Mennonites turning over affairs to the Mennonite Indian Leaders Council in 1977 is just a "yesterday" to the Hopi, and it will take a while for Indian leadership to be effective and expressed. NFM

*I see no way to generalize and talk about Native Americans, since in my brief exposure to other tribes I have found them to be very different from the Northern Cheyenne, among whom I grew up and then spent 3½ years as an adult. The Northern Cheyenne and German Mennonites share extended family-type relationships with a strong group or tribal identity. Example: In gatherings of large numbers of people from these groups (i.e. church conferences, powwows) there is a family reunion kind of atmosphere. Lots of news is exchanged about/with common acquaintances. In daily life there's a drawing on each other in the family for support and sharing of resources.*

*Each group has cultural heritages which make them minorities in the larger society, the Northern Cheyenne to a greater degree than the German Mennonites.*

*Both the Mennonites and Northern Cheyenne have a background of dependence or closeness to the land, but at the same time differing attitudes towards the land. To the German Mennonites the land is seen as having potential to harness, but the Northern Cheyenne see themselves as more a part of the land—benefitting from and suffering with it.*

*In areas of language, both groups have had other than English for a primary language, though today the German Mennonites are much more fluent in English than are the Cheyenne.*

*In their lives as Christians, I would say the Northern Cheyenne draw more on personal experience and pastoral teaching than on a long history of doctrine and theology as do Mennonites. As a people they are much closer to the time when Christianity was first introduced as we know it. Even today there is limited access to the Scriptures in their primary language. BW*

A point of identification that is also a point of conflict is that both Mennonites and tribes have a story, a history, a memory of a definite group of people who experienced conflict, who moved, who followed leaders, who still have ethnic names, language, foods, and dress. For Mennonites, this story is both a Judeo-Christian one that goes all the way back to Abraham and deliverance from Egypt and also an Anabaptist one in the early 16th century in Switzerland and Holland. For Native Americans, it is often a story that includes the creation, a nation (in the full sense of that word) and removal and conflict.

The conflict between Mennonites (the Mennonite church) and Native Americans is that this history and sense of belonging also calls for a kind of loyalty and faith to "your people". So if Native Americans must choose a Christianity that includes all the ethnic and historical baggage, it becomes a painful and destructive choice.

Both Mennonites and Native Americans have a

family and tribal orientation. I think for Mennonites this often includes the Mennonite church—potlucks, MYF, summer church camp, church colleges, four-part hymns, relief sales....I think for Native Americans this often includes ball games, dances, tribal government/Bureau of Indian Affairs, boarding schools, an extended family that is sometimes very transient but still welcome at home (wherever it may be). For Native Americans, when family gatherings coincide with church time, or when beliefs and "superstitions" conflict with "common sense" and tradition for Mennonites, there's conflict.

I think Mennonites have a much stronger work-ethic and achievement orientation than Native Americans I have known, who are workers, but aren't nearly as enthused about achieving, getting ahead, competing, working hard because it feels good, etc. Their society isn't structured that way. I think people are more concerned about resting, observing what's going on, helping to celebrate and mourn, being aware of and being involved in relationships—thus, a difference.

I feel that points of identification between Mennonites and Native Americans would include being part of an extended family system; having low self-esteem or self-concept; powerlessness, or at least feeling powerless; having a concept of "us" vs. "them" or "the world" (for Mennonites) and "the outside" (for Indians); psychological (self-) oppression; values in common such as quality of life including respect for others, nature as central rather than material/monetary gain, community life rather than individualism (individualism, not individuality).

Perhaps I should explain what I mean by psychological self-oppression. For Mennonites, it's feeling generally inferior. In addition, we Mennonites value honesty but we can't be quite honest a lot of the time. For example, we are often unable to honestly confront each other whether simply in disagreement or when we feel someone is downright wrong. Or inability to express our feelings about the personal life of someone to them directly, rather than to someone else. Another example is our cherished guilt complex. On this point, Mennonites who work with Indians fit beautifully into the guilt complex scheme. Mennonites, it seems to me, jump at the chance to feel guilty about anything. This constitutes self-oppression.

Indians, from my experience working in the Boston urban setting do the same thing, only in different areas. One area would be blame. They tend to blame anyone, or anything except themselves, for shortcomings, problems, etc. whether they be personal or part of a program. Many times this is healthily accurate, but often it is not. Mennonites would blame themselves first, and this is just as unhealthy. Of course we don't think so—to us it's humility! I think that the blaming of others done by Indian people stems from feeling inadequate, like total failures. In an attempt to come out of this, something/one gets blamed. It hides the real problems, however. The feelings of failure/inadequacy come from relations with non-Indians. Especially Federal government people and programs, which remind Indian people of their dependency and inability to

maintain self-sufficiency (which Federal programs in fact prevent) every time they turn around (I do not exaggerate). Indian people do the same thing with blame as do we Mennonites with honesty. And Indian people tend very readily to feel blamed, strikingly parallel to our guilt syndrome.

I see points of conflict/difference between Mennonites and Native Americans; they tend to be "exceptions" under the broader categories where there are similarities. An example is that within the extended family scheme, we Mennonites maintain that stable marriages (no separation/divorce) is what should be; that sex outside of marriage is not acceptable. Our system is fairly rigid and clear cut. For Indian people there is also a pattern of the acceptable and unacceptable, in some ways as clear cut and rigid as ours, but very different. Children are greatly cherished. If a girl of 15, unmarried, becomes pregnant, people generally would be happy, as opposed to disapproving. If the girl is, say, 18 and living with the child's father, then there would be rejoicing. People may marry once, but usually not twice. In the older generations, people married in the church, but now they're disillusioned by both the church and marriage, and their children pick up on that.

Another point of difference, quite blatant, is that of oppression from the "outside". Most Mennonites have more than enough to eat, a comfortable place to live, and do not need to worry about what tomorrow may bring. Indians in Boston are at almost the opposite extreme. One never knows what tomorrow may bring. Having enough to eat is seldom a reality and having a comfortable place to live is rare. Simply having a place to go home to sleep at night is comfort enough. This makes a tremendous difference in one's general outlook on life and the world. ABK

**What important things about the present day situation of Native Americans do you want Mennonites to know?**

I would want Mennonite men and women to understand more clearly the history of the relationship between American Indians and the U.S. and Canada, and how that history has affected the economic, social, and political status of Native Americans today. KMB

*Speaking as a Mennonite to Mennonites, I would just want to remind us that there are Native Americans out there who are experiencing racial and class prejudice and years of frustrating injustice. Let's not forget them.* EB

It is easy to accept how the government and educational system has caused divisions among the Hopi people, but not easy to accept that the Mennonite missionaries caused the separation of churches, as early as 1924 and as recent as 1965. Even though the missionary is almost gone, the memory and brokenness is remembered by the Hopi churches. Until General Conference expresses an open apology, and until the Hopi Christians express forgiveness among each other and toward General Conference, the work will just

struggle along as it is now. NFM

*I would want Mennonites to know that the Northern Cheyenne are experiencing continued loss of their heritage/culture, not to mention their lives, and that alcoholism plays a large part in this destruction. I used to see alcoholism as a problem of the will—the person not deciding to quit for one reason or another. I've come to see alcoholism as a problem in which the person becomes powerless over the use of alcohol and requires spiritual as well as physical, emotional, and social resources to gain freedom (sobriety) from its destruction. I find it hard to communicate the trappedness of an alcoholic, the far-reaching effects of the illness, and the need for intervention. If one thinks an alcoholic can decide to stop drinking, and do it on their own, then one thinks the alcoholic who continues to drink is "weak-willed", "irresponsible" and has only themselves to blame for the ensuing problems. I would not want Mennonites to have this latter misunderstanding/prejudice. I do feel that alcoholism is more visible among the Northern Cheyenne, than among middle class Americans, but it may not be that much more prevalent. It certainly is dramatically more destructive—affecting the spiritual, emotional, physical and social/cultural health of the Northern Cheyenne.* BW

I hope Mennonites can be aware, in the present day situation of Native Americans, of the tendency towards self-destruction that can be observed. Both U.S. and Canadian federal government have effectively created a Catch-22 situation, a no-win situation for Indians. In short, what this means is no matter what you do, you lose. An example of this is programs funded by federal grants. In order to receive funding in the first place, you have to write programs with objectives that are impossible to totally fulfill. Then you have to work hard to show why program objectives were not met so that you can get funding for the next year, and so a vicious cycle is maintained. Indian people would very much like not to be dependent on federal monies to run their programs, but not having any resources other than the government upon which to draw, they are left with either federal grants or nothing. The federal government has taken all the resources that Native Americans once had and replaced them with a system which ensures dependency and failure at one and the same time. They simply do not have the resources necessary to pull away from dependency on federal grants. The most distressing aspect of all this is that this system of self-destruction begins to become so much a way of life that Native Americans begin to do it to each other. BOM

*I think it's important for Mennonites to know/be acquainted with Native Americans. I don't mean that Mennonites (non-Indian) should help teach/serve Native Americans. I mean simply learn to know them as fellow persons and Christians. I think Mennonites need to be aware of and respect Native American culture(s), history(s), tragedies and triumphs. There is much in common and much enriching that could happen.* ABK

## Do you feel more able to relate to Native Americans as a woman?

The hidden agenda behind this question was to see whether someone from a minority or "oppressed" group—such as women—could more easily relate to another such group—Native Americans in this case. Most of the non-Indian respondents didn't answer this question, or said that it made very little difference!

Here are brief introductions to the respondents, whose letters were used above:

EB—Ellen Bowman (non-Indian) served with her husband in MCC VS with the Houma tribe in Louisiana, where they continue to live.

BB—Bertha Burbank (non-Indian) is married to Navajo Mennonite pastor Naswood Burbank and lives in Chinle, Arizona.

KMB—Kristina Mast Burnett (non-Indian) worked in MCC VS in Washington, D.C. as an editor for United Indian Planners Association. She and her husband now live near Akron, PA, where she works for MCC as Information Services Director.

ABK—Anne Birky Koehn (non-Indian) has worked with Native Americans in Boston and in southern U.S.A. She is married and lives in Goshen, IN.

BOM—Becky Oyer Meyers (non-Indian) worked in MCC VS in Washington, D.C. as a researcher/writer for the Institute for the Development of Indian Law. Later she worked on the staff of the Boston Indian Council. She and her husband currently live in Goshen, IN.

NFM—Nadenia F. Myron (Hopi Indian) and her husband worked at the Hopi Mission School in Oraibi, AZ. They are now students at Bethel College, North Newton, KS.

BW—Becky Wenger (non-Indian) is a nurse now living in Newton, KS. She spent her childhood (up to ninth grade) and 3½ years as an adult among the Northern Cheyenne in Busby and Lame Deer, MT.

MW—Menno Wiebe (non-Indian) is MCC (Canada)'s Native Concerns Director. He lives and works out of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and is a poet as well.

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Rudolphe Petter, a Swiss Mennonite, began mission work among the Cheyenne Indians in Montana before the turn of the century. A portion of his diary, spanning the months from March 1890 to December 1891, has now been translated from its original French and German by Miriam Schmidt of Newton, KS. The diary includes the period when Petter was still in Switzerland, his marriage, the leaving of his Swiss home, his disillusionment in the U.S., and his exploratory visits to Cheyenne groups before locating his mission work in Montana. The Commission on Home Ministries funded the typing and distribution of the translation to General Conference Mennonite Church college and seminary historical libraries. Persons interested in reading the Petter diary may contact these libraries. Initiative for the translation project came from Lois

Habegger, daughter of Alfred and Barbara Habegger, longtime workers among Montana Indians.

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On May 18, 1880, Samuel and Susanna Haur, the first General Conference Mennonite Church missionaries, left Kansas to begin work among the Arapaho people at Darlington, Oklahoma Territory, and later among the Cheyenne. On May 18, 1980, about 75 people gathered on the Red Wheat Allotment near Clinton, Oklahoma to celebrate what Lawrence Hart (Indian leader and Mennonite pastor) called "a unique centennial". The centennial was unique because, as he wrote in the June 17 *The Mennonite*, "all previous centennial commemorations and observances have involved the military. This particular centennial involves the coming of a historic peace church into our history as Indian people."

Among the activities of the centennial celebration were singing, reminiscing, ethnic (German and Indian) eating, special folk dancing and "specials". A special is a generous giveaway of shawls, blankets, money, kitchen utensils, or food to honor an important event and the persons who attend. Master of ceremonies Max Malone said, "In non-Indian society the accumulation of material goods is the accepted way to gain status. In traditional Indian society we give away our goods because it is like the circulation of the blood among us. It is an honor for us to do this."

Bertha Little Coyote, who gained church-wide recognition during Mennonite World Conference in Wichita as leader of a Cheyenne chorus, made special musical contributions to the centennial celebration.

## Native American Directory Released

*Kristina Mast Burnett*

Where are communities of American Indian Christians located today? How many are there? What are their characteristics? What are their problems? How do they communicate?

R. Pierce Beaver, long-time writer of mission history, has drawn together a directory as an attempt to answer those questions and to help American Indian communities "find each other." (Beaver was unable to collect sufficient data to include Canadian Natives in the study.)

The book is particularly valuable for its sensitive discussion of Indian missions and mission problems. There are 320,000 Christians among Indian peoples in the U.S., 43 percent of the 1970 Indian population. That figure should call the church to the task of primary evangelism, Beaver asserts.

In presenting the book at an MCC meeting (MCC contributed funds toward research for the book), Beaver emphasized that the church must break the pattern of equating Christianity with "white culture". He noted that "Indians are taking the initiative in doing what the overseas churches have done during the past century—finding ways to indigenize the church. There is only hope for the Indian community to grow when



church leaders begin to allow Indians to express their own culture in the churches," he said.

*The Native American Christian Community: A Di-*

*rectory of Indian, Aleut, and Eskimo Communities* by Dr. R. Pierce Beaver; Missions Advanced Research and Communications Center (MARC), Monrovia, CA, 1979; 395 pages. \$7.30.

# Which Way Women?

Dorothy Yoder Nyce, Editor

A Project of MCC Peace Section's Task Force on Women in Church and Society

WHICH WAY WOMEN? is a collection of 42 articles plus bibliographies and poetry, written predominantly by Mennonites and intended primarily for a Mennonite audience. Published midway through the International Women's Decade, the book materials cluster around the three major themes of International Women's Year - Equality, Development, and Peace.

"When I first opened the package containing Which Way Women?, I felt pride in the quality of prose and poetry of Mennonite women (and a few men) writers. I felt kinship with Mennonite women ancient and modern around the world. I felt love for women wounded through years of discrimination who are working for change with admirable sensitivity. I felt joy that the cloud of witnesses to women's worth is growing. I felt hope that real change may yet be coming. I even took pleasure in the quality of the printing and the spiral notebook format. Buy Which Way Women? and savor its exquisite variety: 'The Bible and Women,' 'On Choosing to Combine Parenting with Occupations,' 'Women and World Hunger,' 'Feminist Theology,' 'Women and Wealth,' 'Are Anabaptists Motherless?' 'Peace Women,' 'Our Mother Mary,' and dozens of other articles."--Herta Funk

WHICH WAY WOMEN? is available in soft cover, spiral bound format. Please fill in the form below and return with \$3.00 (\$3.50 Canada) to:

MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women  
21 S. 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501

Please send me WHICH WAY WOMEN?, edited by Dorothy Yoder Nyce, a project of MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women. I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Number of copies \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Review

*Homosexuality and the Bible: An Interpretation*, by Walter Barnett (Pendle Hill Pamphlet 226, \$1.25). This pamphlet, published in July 1979 by Pendle Hill, a "residential center for religious and social study maintained by the Society of Friends," is perhaps the best pamphlet to date on the subject of homosexuality and the Bible. The author, a former Fulbright scholar, a law professor, and the author of *Jesus—The Story of His Life* (Nelson-Hall, 1976), states that the pamphlet is intended to examine modern research on those biblical passages which seem to deal with homosexuality, along with current scientific thinking on psychosexual development.

Much of what Barnett says will not be new to those familiar with this area. Similar arguments can be found in the writings of theologians and biblical scholars from many different denominations, Mennonite and Brethren included. However, these ideas have seldom been presented in such a succinct and forceful manner. It should be an excellent tool for those in dialogue with nongay persons in the church, and a help to gay persons struggling with their own identity and religious convictions.

The pamphlet can be ordered by writing to Pendle Hill Publications, Wallingford, PA 19086. Orders for less than \$5 should be prepaid; enclose handling charges for 50¢ for one pamphlet, 65¢ for 2 to 8 pamphlets.—*Dialogue*, March 1980

## Names Solicited for Resource List

Women in Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches today have a wide variety of skills and resources that could be used more widely within the context of the church. Mennonite women are seminary graduates, are serving in pastoral roles, have had significant overseas or domestic service experience, and are experienced as seminar leaders and retreat speakers, for example.

The boards of Mennonite church agencies, conference and seminar planning committees and other church groups or bodies often don't include women as members or participants simply because they are not aware of eligible, qualified women to fill these roles.

The MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women promotes broader inclusion of women at decision-making levels, as resource persons and in other dimensions of church life and institutional activities. We are compiling a list of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ women who have such resources to offer, especially in the areas of theology, religious life and women's issues. If you would like to be included on the listing or know of someone who should, please complete this form and mail it to: *Women's Task Force Resource Listing, MCC Peace Section, Akron, PA 17501.*

Name:

Address:

Church denomination:

Area(s) in which I am willing to serve as a resource:

My current occupation(s) is:

My educational background is:

My experience includes:

Please attach additional sheets as necessary.



## News and Verbs

From the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. minutes: "Moved, Seconded, and Carried that we recommend to MCC that all appointing and electing bodies set a goal of achieving more equal representation of women on the plenary MCC body."

Nancy Heisey of Lancaster, Pa., has been named to a new position of secretary for southern Africa at Mennonite Central Committee. Heisey, who has been assistant secretary for Africa since 1977, will also be responsible for MCC programs in Nigeria and Zambia. Ray Brubacher of Akron, who has served as secretary for Africa since 1972 with the exception of one year, will be secretary for central and northern Africa. The appoint-



ment of two administrative secretaries for the continent of Africa reflects the growing size and diversity of the Africa program. Currently there are almost 200 people serving in 15 African countries.—*MCC News Service*

In January 1980 the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities (EMBM), Salunga, Pennsylvania, held a day and a half consultation on "Mission for the Eighties." The document accepted in March by both the Executive and Board of fifty members was entitled "Pilgrimage in Mission." Near the end of the fourteen-page document under administration came the following statement about women: "Jesus in the midst of his people implies that both men and women participate in Scriptural interpretation and policy

making. The Gospels make clear that women had a deep understanding of the Messiahship (John 4:25,26), the death (John 12:7), and the resurrection (John 20:17,18) of Christ. The modern missionary movement, including our own, has engaged more women than men in the missionary task. In order to promote a witness with integrity, mission board structures must provide opportunities for women to participate in the decision making"—Submitted by *Bertha Beachy, Salunga, Pa.*

*Greta Lodder*, Dutch social worker and teacher of the handicapped, is an MCC volunteer working with the Roman Catholic Church in Recife, Brazil. There are about eighty handicapped children in Greta's area, and she visits twenty a week. "It depends on the child what I do—playing or singing with them. One part of my visit is always to tell or read a story of the Bible....," she says.

"In February 1886 Andreas S. Voth was called to Cantonment (Oklahoma) as a teacher with a yearly salary of \$300 plus lodging and board. Up to this time the (General Conference Mennonite) missionaries had been paid \$200 a year, the workers \$150, and the women \$120."—*Prairie Pioneer* by *Christian Krehbiel* (*Faith and Life Press*, p. 116).

*Ruth Chen Lin* is the 1980 recipient of Bluffton (Ohio) College's "outstanding young alumni award." A 1968 graduate of Bluffton, Ruth directs the Heui-Ming School and Home for Blind Children in Taiwan, directs the Taichung Women's Choir, is president of Taiwan Women in Mission, and is a board member of the Mei-Chuan Mennonite Church. She and her physician-husband, Chao Chen Lin, parent his six children.

*Ralph and Mary Cline Detrich*, co-pastors in the Church of the Brethren, have prepared a dramatization of their roles in a classic egalitarian marriage. Chris De Korne reports in *Newsletter* (of the Committee for Women in the Christian Reformed Church): "Mary made an intensive study of the life and dealings of Jesus with women in the Gospels....Ralph dealt with some Pauline passages which are often quoted out of context....The couple closed in unison since neither wanted to have the last word." The Detrichs can be reached through the Church of the Brethren offices, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, Illinois 60120.

Circle 27-29 March 1981 on your calendar. Another *Women in Ministry* conference will take place, this one at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. With a large selection of workshops, this conference will go beyond consciousness-raising.

*Mary Mae Schwartzendruber* (Brussels, Ontario) and *Rose Waltner* (Elkhart, Indiana), seminary students, are in Communaute' de Grandchamp in Switzerland until about the end of September. They will have been

the first Mennonites in this commune of sisters coming from many denominations. Two from Grandchamp, *Sister Albertine* and *Sister Maatji*, attended Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries for six months this past school year, beginning the exchange.

*Marian Claassen Franz* will be a "churchman (sic) in residence" along with her husband Delton at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, this coming school year. Marian and Delton bring to this assignment their many years of experience in Washington, D.C., and before that in Chicago church work. In Washington, Marian worked in the *Dunamis* office on Capitol Hill, providing Christian supportiveness for and ministry to legislators. The Franzes will teach a course "The Church as Change Agent" during the fall term.

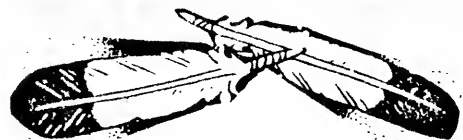
*Kateri Tekakwitha*, 1656-?, was beatified (declared blessed) by Pope John Paul II in Vatican City this summer. She is the first American Indian to approach sainthood. (Once beatified a figure is usually canonized a saint.) Tekakwitha, member of the Iroquois confederacy, fled her upstate New York tribe to work in a Roman Catholic mission.

*Dorothy Yoder Nyce*, assisted by *Anna Kreider Juhnke*, will teach a three-week course "Women in Church and Society" in the January 1981 interterm at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. Consider taking a mini-sabbatical and go to seminary for three weeks! Other courses offered this coming January are "The Revelation of John" taught by *Gertrude Roten*, "Anabaptist History and Theology" taught by C.J. Dyck, "Church and Ministry" taught by Ross T. Bender, and "Marital and Family Therapy" taught by David Augsburg.

Native Americans are again primary victims in the U.S. quest for "progress"—this time for energy sources. Currently twenty-seven companies are exploring a million acres for uranium in the Black Hills of South Dakota, home of 30,000 Indians, mostly Sioux.

New Mexico is the site of (in addition to Los Alamos Scientific Laboratories and Gulf Oil's uranium shaft into Mount Taylor) Grants Mineral Belt, over half of which belongs to the Navajos and Pueblos. This belt produces 49 percent of U.S. uranium; in July 1979 a hundred million gallons of radioactive water spilled from the waste storage lagoon, contaminating adjacent land and sixty miles of the Rio Puerco River.

Nevada, testing ground for atomic and nuclear devices, is also the home of the Shoshone, Washoe, and Paiute. Now Shoshone land is being taken for deployment of the MX missile.—From "*Native Americans and the Nuclear Threat*" by *Alic Daly* in *Peace and Freedom*, June-July 1980.





The next meeting of the Task Force on Women in Church and Society will be in Chicago on 20 November 1980. New members attending will be *Martha Smith Good* of New Hamburg, Ontario, and *Berthy Beachy*, Salunga, Pennsylvania. Continuing members are *Rosie Epp* of Wichita, Kansas, *Mary Dueck* of Fresno, California, *Edith Krause* of Vancouver, B.C., *Elsa Redekopp* of Winnipeg, Manitoba. *Anna Mary Brubacher* of Kitchener, Ontario will continue for one more year in an advisory capacity.

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*Sue Schumacher*, (Pandora, Ohio) recent voluntary service staff person at Hopi Mission School in Oraibi, Arizona, coordinated the fifty-five entries from HMS to the Hopi Cultural Center 1980 art show. Some of these entries were selected to be part of a traveling exhibit.

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*Christina Hart*, thirteen-year-old daughter of Lawrence (Cheyenne chief and Mennonite pastor) and Betty Hart, was selected from an Oklahoma-wide competition to attend a summer ballet school.

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*Ruth Beebe Hill* spent thirty years researching and writing *Hanto Yo*, a "Roots"-like story of a band of Sioux. She interviewed upwards of 800 Indians, lived on reservations, and at one time went on a five-day "starve," during which time she didn't eat or drink. *Chunksa Yuha*, 74, a full-blooded Santee Sioux, spent sixteen years teaching Mrs. Hill the archaic and nearly-forgotten Dakotah-Lakotah dialect. They translated her 2,000-page manuscript into Dakotah-Lakotah and then retranslated it into English of the period (1800s). "I am not an authority on the American Indian," Mrs. Hill says, "but I would like to add, neither is anyone else." The Nebraska Indian Commission has criticized the book negatively, and has expressed opposition to ABC plans to televise it in a miniseries.

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*Susan La Flesche Picotte*, 1865-1915, was the first American Indian to become a medical doctor. An Omaha Indian herself, she was appointed in 1905 by the Presbyterian Church to be a missionary to the Omaha tribe.

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Mennonite Central Committee has been partially funding the basic costs and educational materials of Women's Seminars in Zaire. This seminar series aims to stimulate the interest of church women in Christian family life, health, nutrition, and sewing. It is sponsored by the Mennonite Church of Zaire. Each year seminars teach in a different phase of each of these areas. For example, in 1980 a special Bible speaker has lessons on Christian teaching in the home and ways to strengthen it. Other subjects being taught are ways to prepare sons and daughters for courtship and marriage, contagious diseases, improving cooking methods, preservation of the soil, crop rotation, seed selection and more complicated sewing. One goal of the seminars is that each

participant return to her home village and begin teaching other women what she has learned. To help facilitate this, MCC gave money to put together a basic packet of materials which would be useful to the woman trying to teach. This packet includes visual aids and short helps written in her language. A major result of the first series given in 1979 was that women saw how they can play a part in the life of the Zairean church as well as an increase in the individuals' self-esteem and self-respect for having participated. *Ina Rocke* of Banga, Zaire, who serves with the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, says, "The women have been working and praying together, encouraging one another in spite of tribal differences. Last year they took complete responsibility for the sewing and really did a better job than we could have done."—*Marion Keeney Preheim*, MCC News Service

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*Nori Matsuura*, recent past secretary of the all-Mennonite organization in Tokyo, is studying for a master's degree at Wichita (Kansas) State University in order to continue her work in teaching the speech handicapped. During a previous stay in the U.S., she taught in a Brethren in Christ church program in New York City.

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*Donna Johnson* and *MaryLynn Sheetz* were convicted in Colorado Springs (Colorado) Municipal Court of unlawfully handing out leaflets about the draft at a local shopping center. They had not signed a permit agreement on this occasion (or on any of the other occasions when they have done shopping-center leafletting) considering the terms of such an agreement unreasonable. (One requirement, for example, is the posting of a \$200,000 bond!) The leaflets stated: "The President wants you to sign a blank check. Stop and think before you register." They also included information about where people could go for counseling. Don King, local ACLU attorney and a legal advisor for the Center on Law and Pacifism defended on the grounds of (1) the public nature of the shopping center and cited a new case, *Prunyard v. Robin*, and (2) the reasonableness of the activity and (3) the selective enforcement of the use of the property by the owners. The city presented several witnesses such as security guards, police officers, and representatives of the shopping center corporation, establishing that the two were leafletting and did not stop when asked because they believed they had a Constitutional right to continue. Testimony indicated that the defendants complied with all parts of the agreement even though they didn't sign it. They also showed that other groups had been able to leaflet there, including the military. The judge decided that there was no significant relationship between the leafletting and the function of the shopping center, that there was no proof of 18 and 19-year-olds receiving the leaflets, that there was no proof of military recruitment there, that there was no showing of selective enforcement, that there was no proof of absence of other places or methods available to leaflet. He found the defendants guilty and fined them \$5.00 suspended, after defendants said they would not pay, and \$4.00

court costs which he later stayed, pending an appeal when defendants said they would not pay that either because of conscience. The prosecutor insisted that they not be allowed to go back to the shopping center for one year which the judge added to the sentence. The case may be appealed.—*Bill Durland in Newsletter, Center on Law and Pacifism, July 1980*

*Sharon Detweiler*, director of Mennonite Student/Young Adult Services in Philadelphia, is planning a seminar on "Women and the Mennonite Church" for October 18. It will be held at the Christian Association Building on the University of Pennsylvania campus in Philadelphia from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Registration is \$2.00 at the door. Speakers will be Beulah Hostetler—"A Christian Woman's Response to the Feminist Movement," and Nancy Fisher-Outley—"Stereotypes of Mennonite Women" and "Dealing with Anger and Insecurity."

When you come across news and verbs that you would like to share with the other 1,150 readers of this *Report*, send them to me at 4830 Woodland Ave., Lincoln, NE 68516.—*Muriel Thiessen Stackley*

## Letters

I have just finished reading the March-April issue on the Returned Missionary Women. A friend loaned me the copy that she had received from a friend! I would like to enter my name on your subscription list. *Arlene G. Leaman, LaJunta, Colorado (18 June 1980).*

Your *Report* #30, March-April 1980, was a great blessing to me. Would it be possible for you to send a

copy of this issue to (name and address given). *Joseph C. Shenk, Nairobi, Kenya (21 May 1980).*

## Looking Ahead

Forthcoming *Reports* will focus on:

Developing Leadership Skills. September-October 1980. Rosie Epp, coordinator.

Women in Mennonite Business/Industry. November-December 1980. Mary Dueck, coordinator.

Women and Militarism. January-February 1981. Winifred Beechy and Janet Umble Reedy, coordinators.

Mentors and Role Models for Mennonite Women. March-April 1981. Katie Funk Wiebe, coordinator.

Mennonite Women Writers. May-June 1981. Elsa Redekopp, coordinator.

Are you aware of written or audio-visual resources on these topics? We would like to recommend them in *Report*. Have you (or do you know someone who has) been researching or writing on these topics, particularly as they relate to peace issues, Mennonites, or the Christian church? What actions have been taken in these areas in the community where you are living or by your congregation?

Send all such information to Editor, *Report*, 4830 Woodland Ave., Lincoln, NE 68516.

USPS 367-790

The *Report* is a bi-monthly publication of the MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church and Society. Correspondence should be sent to Editor Muriel Thiessen Stackley, 4830 Woodland, Lincoln, NE 68516.

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